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63-8668

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Action Memorandum No. 315Date 19 November 1963

TO : Chief, Counter Intelligence Staff

VIA : Deputy Director/Plans

SUBJECT : Review of Agency Use of Cryptonyms

REFERENCE:

1. I believe the time is appropriate to take a new look at certain aspects of our use of cryptonyms in cable traffic. Our communications and physical security have tightened considerably since the last review. These points, in particular, should be considered:

a. Do we overuse cryptonyms where there is no longer a valid security reason for doing so? Even though the use of cryptonyms sometimes simplifies the drafting of cables for officers familiar with a fixed set of cryptonyms, they generally make their reading much slower, especially by senior officers who cannot be familiar with all the cryptonyms. I would like to know where we must use cryptonyms for security reasons and where we can eliminate cryptonyms with no sacrifice of security. I recognize there will be certain grey areas.

b. It is my understanding that a great many cryptonyms now in use have been compromised at least once and should be changed or dropped.

c. A good many of our cryptonyms designating other Government agencies or their components have connotations which could offend individuals from these agencies if inadvertently seen. ODENVY and [] are just two examples. Although cryptonyms should never be seen or heard except by Agency personnel, the fact of the matter is that they not infrequently are. Therefore, cryptonyms designating U. S. Government agencies or friendly services should have no implied meaning.

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d. We should also consider the fact that Agency cables with cryptonyms go to Agency components where they are handled by personnel who are not disciplined in cryptonym procedure.

2. Please let me have by 2 December your recommendations for reviewing our cryptonym procedure; I would like your opinion on what specific corrections and changes should be made before any actual work is begun.

(signed) Lyman B. Kirkpatrick

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Executive Director

cc: Director of Communications
Director of Security

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